



Dear Prospective Master Gardener:

Thank you for your interest in the Master Gardener Program. Upon completion of training, Master Gardeners have one of the best gardening references available for Florida. It is a compilation of Cooperative Extension fact sheets, bulletins, and circulars that apply specifically to our unique climate soil types and, growing conditions. You will have the opportunity to learn from University of Florida Extension Agents and select guests. Classes will begin at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, January 9th, 2018. They will continue every consecutive Tuesday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. through March 27th, 2018.

In order to be considered for this program, it is necessary for you to do several things.

- 1) Study the attached Sprouting Kit and complete the questionnaire.
- 2) Study the attached Florida Master Gardener Volunteer Contract. (Please bring to the interview)
- 3) Complete the following forms: Florida Master Gardener Volunteer Application, Sprouting Kit Questionnaire
- 4) We have a **limited** number of openings for this class, **priority is given to St. Lucie County residents**. Kate O'Neill will be scheduling interview appointments for Oct 27th, 30th, and 31st, and Nov 14th. Please call or email Kate for an appointment (772) 462-1660 or kasmi@ufl.edu.
- 5) There is a fee of \$190 required to participate in the Master Gardener Training. Full payment is required upon acceptance into the class (check or cash, please bring to interview).

I look forward to meeting you.
Horticulturally yours,

A handwritten signature in purple ink, appearing to read "Kate Rotindo", with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Kate Rotindo
Urban Horticulture Agent

ST. LUCIE COUNTY

MASTER GARDENER SPROUTING KIT

This sprouting kit contains information that will be useful to you in understanding the Master Gardener program as well as the role and responsibilities of a volunteer Master Gardener. It will also give you insight into the Florida Cooperative Extension, how it functions and how Master Gardeners operate as a part of Cooperative Extension.

Please read the enclosed materials and complete the two questionnaires at the back of this packet.

If you have any questions, please contact:

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THE MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

PART 1 - HISTORY

The rapid urban growth in many areas of the United States and increased interest in the environment and home gardens have prompted ever-increasing numbers of homeowner questions to County Cooperative Extension agents. Many of these questions are seasonal in nature and are answered relatively easily, assuming that one has horticultural training.

In 1972, an innovative Extension Agent in the State of Washington reasoned that well trained volunteers could respond to typical homeowner questions freeing him and his colleagues for more technical and difficult problems. Volunteers, such as Extension homemakers and 4-H Leaders, had always been a part of the Extension but never before in the area of homeowner horticulture. The Extension Agent selected trained and certified volunteers as Master Gardeners. They soon succeeded in meeting his desired objectives - in fact, they exceeded his expectations. And so it was that the Master Gardener Program began.

Since that time, the Master Gardener Program has grown and is now active in all 50 states. Florida's began in 1979. The program has been a tremendous success and is now in 58 of Florida's 67 counties. The Master Gardener Program in Florida is sponsored by the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) of which the Cooperative Extension is part.

Just what is the Cooperative Extension? The Morrill Act established colleges in each state to be financed through grants of land from a name which is known as Land Grant Universities. These colleges would emphasize teaching practical subjects such as agriculture and home economics. The 1887 Hatch Act provided for experimental stations at Land Grant Colleges to conduct research for those colleges' agricultural problems.

Then, in 1914, the Smith-Lever Act created the Extension as a part of these colleges as a means of disseminating the practical knowledge gained through agricultural research. The University of Florida at Gainesville is Florida's Land Grant College; the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is that part of the University which has responsibility for Cooperative Extension.

The term cooperative refers to the method by which extension services are funded. In Florida, three cooperating tax sources provide funds: The U.S. Department of Agriculture, the State through legislative appropriations and the counties through appropriations by county governments. The word cooperative also implies a sharing of information generated through sound research programs at the Federal and State levels. The term Extension defines this organization's purpose - to extend the information generated at the State and Federal level to people at the county level in the form of a service. The Cooperative Extension is an informal educational organization that provides information in three main areas: Agriculture, Family and Consumer Sciences and 4-H Youth. Community Development, Marine Biology, Natural Resources and Energy are associated programs.

The motto and goal of Cooperative Extension is Helping People Help Themselves. Thus, you can see how well the volunteer Master Gardener concept fits into the ultimate objectives and goals of Extension.

PART II - ST. LUCIE COUNTY

In St. Lucie County, the Master Gardener Program began in 1983. Today it is estimated more than 529 Master Gardeners have been trained since 1983. Many of them have continued to remain active, often working many hours each week.

Selection to become a candidate for the Master Gardener Training Program is not predicated on prior training, education, knowledge, experience, age, race, sex, or physical disability.

A sincere desire to help others, a desire to learn and a personal commitment to volunteer are the major selection criteria involved. Gardening experience and knowledge are always helpful but they are by no means a requirement for selection for the Master Gardener Training Program.

PART III - MASTER GARDENER TRAINING

The Master Gardener Training Program is demanding and intensive. The 84 hours of training will consist of traditional classroom, field, lab, and Internet activities. Subjects include basic botany, entomology, pathology, ecosystems, soils, fertilizers, vegetables, citrus, turf grasses, use

of (and alternatives to) chemicals, ornamentals, and related topics. All information is based on the knowledge and research of the University of Florida.

Each weekly session is approximately 7 ½ hours (including lunch), 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. every Tuesday and one (1) Saturday morning, 8:00 a.m. – noon. The session topics are outlined in the Master Gardener Syllabus, which will be available on-line @ <http://stlucie.ifas.ufl.edu> and distributed on the interview date.

Each trainee will be provided resources containing extensive reference materials from the University of Florida. These materials are updated frequently so that Master Gardeners are always provided the most current recommendations approved by the University of Florida.

Master Gardeners deal only with homeowner-type questions. The Extension Agents themselves respond to all commercial/professional growers' problems.

On completion of the training period, all Master Gardener trainees are required to satisfactorily complete a comprehensive examination on the material covered. Only then can the trainees become certified and be awarded the title of Master Gardener.

Once certified, Master Gardeners must abide by a set of policies set out by the University of Florida and IFAS. Those policies regarding Florida Master Gardeners are attached and should be carefully studied.

PART IV - MASTER GARDENER ACTIVITIES

Most Master Gardener activities center around the Cooperative Extension offices in Fort Pierce and Port St. Lucie at least initially.

Volunteer hours (75) are broken down as follows:

4 hours – Fort Pierce or the Port St. Lucie Master Gardener office

16 hours – Fort Pierce Master Gardener office or assisting in the Extension Demonstration gardens.

55 hours – variety of activities as noted below.

Many Master Gardeners continue their close association with the Extension Office by answering telephone calls, following up with homeowner questions, even developing presentations for garden clubs and other civic associations. Others choose to work in the shade house or demonstration gardens. Master Gardeners are strong supporters of 4-H and school enrichment programs. Master Gardeners can present classes to the public, helping the typical new-to-Florida homeowner adapt his gardening techniques to the peculiarities of Florida and St. Lucie County in particular.

As the Master Gardeners assist the Master Gardener Coordinator and Extension Agent, they are in effect extending the Extension's outreach abilities. As such, they provide advice and recommendations which have been well documented as a result of experimentation and testing and are approved by the University of Florida or other Land Grant Universities.

Training never ceases for the certified and working Master Gardener. Ten certified educational

units (CEU's) are required to be completed each year. Six times throughout the year, Master Gardeners have their general meetings. These meetings are also used for planning and status reports on various projects and information exchange and updates. There are field trips to gardens, nurseries, parks and similar facilities, used for further training throughout the year. Every other year there is a state conference. This is presented by State Extension specialists who strive to bring all Master Gardeners into sync with the latest horticultural developments and provide a look into the future of horticultural research.

PART V - CONCLUSION

Master Gardeners are people wanting to help others make the program what it is. Words cannot describe the sense of accomplishment one feels in helping someone become a better gardener. These are the people who make America green and who bond together through a common interest in gardening, horticulture, and the spirit of volunteerism. The Master Gardener Program is a wonderful opportunity to learn and to help your community. We hope that you will become a part of this growing experience.

ST. LUCIE COUNTY GUIDELINES REGARDING RECERTIFICATION AND INACTIVE STATUS

RENEWAL (for current Master Gardeners)

A Master Gardener may renew for participation in the program for another year by:

1. Committing to 35 hours of volunteer work to be completed in one year.
AND
2. By having completed ten hours additional horticulture training. Examples: New Master Gardening Training, Master Gardener Advanced Training: Annual Native Plant Society Meeting, attending Extension Horticulture programs, Master Gardener organized field trips, Florida Federation of Garden Club Seminars, University or Community College course-work etc. (This training must be approved by the Environmental Horticulture Agent)

INACTIVE STATUS

An inactive Master Gardener is one who is unable to commit to the contracted 35 hours of volunteer service. If the Master Gardener would like the opportunity to renew their status, the following policies apply:

1. An inactive Master Gardener is one who is in good standing, having completed their original commitment of 75 hours of volunteer service.
2. An inactive Master Gardener must attend or have attended ten hours of acceptable horticultural training in order to renew (refer to the above renewal #2).
3. An inactive Master Gardener can renew at any time as long as the above criteria are met.
4. Inactive Master Gardeners are ineligible for mailings, business meetings, or advanced training in Gainesville.

FLORIDA MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER APPLICATION

**** PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT LEGIBLY ****

SECTION I:

NAME _____

NICKNAME, IF ANY _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ CELL _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

SECTION II:

Have you applied for Master Gardener training before? _____ Yes _____ No
If yes, when? _____ Where? _____

Please list any training and/or practical experience you have had in gardening, horticulture, farming, or related fields: _____

Please list any specialized gardening interests or hobbies you have, e.g., vegetables, house plants, ornamentals, turfgrasses, landscaping, etc.: _____

Do you live here year-round or seasonally? If seasonally, please indicate which months _____

What gardening affiliations do you have, e.g., garden clubs, horticulture societies, etc.? _____

Are you currently volunteering in any other organizations (e.g., Cancer Society, Kiwanis Club, Gardening Club, PTO, etc.?) _____ Yes _____ No

How did you learn about the Master Gardener Program? _____

Why do you want to become a Master Gardener? _____

Name_____

Date_____

SPROUTING KIT QUESTIONNAIRE

Use the information provided with this application to answer the following questions. Please circle the letter indicating your answer and return to St. Lucie County Cooperative Extension, on your scheduled interview day.

1. The Master Gardener Program is sponsored by:
 - a. The University of South Florida
 - b. The U.S. Department of Agriculture
 - c. University of Florida IFAS (Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences)
 - d. Florida Department of Plant Industry

2. The Cooperative Extension Service was created by a legislative act called:
 - a. The Morrill Act (1862)
 - b. The Smith-Lever Act (1914)
 - c. The Hatch Act (1887)
 - d. The Larson Act (1898)

3. The St. Lucie County Master Gardeners are required to volunteer how many hours the first year to Cooperative Extension programs?
 - a. 25 hours
 - b. 35 hours
 - c. 50 hours
 - d. 75 hours

4. The Cooperative Extension Service is funded by:
 - a. The Federal Government
 - b. The State of Florida
 - c. The County of St. Lucie
 - d. All of the above

5. St. Lucie County Master Gardeners are required to attain how many hours of horticultural training in order to recertify for another year?
 - a. 3 hours.
 - b. 6 hours.
 - c. 10 hours.
 - d. 15 hours.

6. The Master Gardener Program increases or extends the Extension's outreach abilities identified by the Master Gardener Coordinator and Extension Agent.
 - a. True
 - b. False

7. The Cooperative Extension Service provides information to the community primarily in the program(s) and area(s) of:
 - a. Family & Consumer Sciences
 - b. 4-H Youth.
 - c. Agriculture.
 - d. All of the above.

8. Master Gardeners make recommendations to home-owners based on:
 - a. Public sources such as, the internet, books, magazines and newspaper articles.
 - b. Personal, practical experience.
 - c. Information generated by the University of Florida or other Land Grant Universities
 - d. All of the above.

9. The title "Master Gardener" is to be used only in association with the Master Gardener Program and not for commercial purposes.
 - a. True.
 - b. False.

10. Master Gardeners are occasionally called upon to extend information to people involved in commercial agricultural/horticultural endeavors.
 - a. True.
 - b. False.

FLORIDA MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER CONTRACT POLICIES REGARDING FLORIDA MASTER GARDENERS

Within the state of Florida, 56 counties currently maintain active Master Gardener programs. This being the case, a need exists for the establishment of standards for all Florida Master Gardeners to represent their county in a manner consistent with exemplary citizenship and leadership.

To become a certified Florida Master Gardener, one is required to attend the prescribed hours of instruction and pass an examination administered by the University of Florida/IFAS Cooperative Extension Service. This certification is restrictive in nature and is valid only for one year and when the individual is participating in the Florida Master Gardener Program. New certifications will be issued each year only to those individuals who make a commitment for participation in the coming year.

As a certified Florida Master Gardener, you will be eligible to attend educational programs such as the Florida Master Gardener Continued Training Conference offered by the University of Florida, as well as local educational programs and field trips provided by the county agent. Master Gardeners are also provided with the most recent information available on environmental horticulture issues and related topics by the County Master Gardener Coordinator and State Extension Specialists.

Master Gardeners are encouraged to participate in all components of the planned program (including record keeping), be responsive to the reasonable requests of the county agent in charge, and be respectful of the need for personal safety and the safety of others. Whenever injuries do occur, they should be reported to the County Master Gardener Coordinator immediately. Along with active participation, Master Gardeners are expected to uphold a professional demeanor. The University of Florida/IFAS Cooperative Extension Service functions without regard to race, sex, or national origin and does not tolerate:

- Possession of alcohol or drugs in the workplace;
- Abuse or theft of public or personal property;
- Sexual harassment or misconduct;
- Verbal abuse or failure to cooperate with other Master Gardeners, staff members, and/or the public;
- Possession or use of weapons or fireworks in the workplace;
- Defamation of the organization;
- Creating an implied or outright University or Extension Service endorsement of any product or place of business;
- Misrepresentation of sources of information;
- Consistently giving out incorrect information;
- Use of state and/or county equipment without authorization.

Master Gardener Certification may become void when an individual ceases active participation in the program or dismissal may result from violations described above. Illegal activities will be referred to law enforcement. Those individuals not continuing in the program should be aware if they represent themselves as Florida Master Gardeners, they are violating their original commitment to the University of Florida/IFAS Cooperative Extension Service.

The training and experience gained by participation in the Florida Master Gardener program are valuable and may rightly be listed and featured as qualifications when seeking employment. Once employed, and while serving as a paid employee, or if self-employed, Master Gardeners shall not display credentials or give the appearance of being a Florida Master Gardener at the place of business.

Experienced Florida Master Gardeners may be invited to speak before various community groups. Please do not seek payment for such speaking appearances. Gratuitous personal payments (i.e., in the form of cash or gifts) for such presentations are not encouraged.

The title “Florida Master Gardener” is to be used only and exclusively in the University of Florida/IFAS Cooperative Extension Service Master Gardener Program in which trained and certified Florida Master Gardeners answer gardening questions. Master Gardeners are expected to use the title only when doing unpaid volunteer educational work on the behalf of the University of Florida/IFAS Cooperative Extension Service. Florida Master Gardeners shall not use the Florida Master Gardener title in any advertisements or activities not related to University of Florida/IFAS Master Gardener activities. The Florida Master Gardener program represents a University of Florida Cooperative Extension Service public education program and one should avoid having association with commercial products or implying University of Florida/IFAS Cooperative Extension Service endorsements of any product or place of business.

In making recommendations, which include the use of chemicals (i.e., insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides), Florida Master Gardener **MUST FOLLOW PUBLISHED** University of Florida/IFAS Cooperative Extension recommendations. Cultural problems that are not specially covered by University of Florida/IFAS Cooperative Extension Service recommendations may be handled by suggesting treatments, which an experienced Master Gardener considers appropriate. If you are making a recommendation based on personal experience, state clearly that you are speaking for yourself and not the Extension Service. Questions concerning any commercial horticultural enterprise (i.e., vegetable production, fruit crops production, landscape maintenance of golf course, recreational park, school grounds or commercial nursery production) are to be referred to the local Horticulture Extension Agent.

Special Note:

Individuals who are not acting on behalf of the University of Florida/IFAS Cooperative Extension Service are strongly urged to make every effort to minimize the appearance of being on duty before making any recommendations in the area of horticulture. Speaking “off the record” is your right; however, make sure everyone knows you are speaking for yourself and not the Extension Service.

I have read the above policies regarding my services as a Florida Master Gardener volunteer and do here by agree to give at least 75 hours of service in my first year and at least 35 hours in each subsequent year to the Florida Master Gardener Program in return for the training provided by the University of Florida/IFAS Cooperative Extension Service.

I have also read the state guidelines regarding active/inactive status of Master Gardeners and understand the recertification policy.

Signature

Signature of County Extension Agent

Date

Date